

III. REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 17 and 26 have been amended and claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 20, 21, 29 and 30 have been canceled. As a result, claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9-19, 22-28 and 31-34 remain pending in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Office, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Office. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-11, 14-17, 20-26 and 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Tackman *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 7,051,364), hereafter “Tackman.” Claims 12, 13, 18, 19, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tackman in view of Cornelius *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 7,069,234), hereafter “Cornelius.”

A. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-11, 14-17, 20-26 AND 29-34 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection over Tackman, Applicants assert that Tackman does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention. For example, with respect to independent claims 1, 17 and 26, Applicants submit that Tackman fails to teach requesting and/or receiving approval of the contract prior to the execution of the contract. In its

argument to the contrary, the Office cites a passage of Tackman, which provides an overview of its client-server based “Credit Highway” system. This system “...allows traditional paper contracts to be replaced with electronic contracts.” Col. 6, lines 7-19. However, nowhere in this passage or elsewhere does Tackman specify an approval that occurs prior to execution. As such, the Credit Highway system of the Tackman does not teach the pre-execution approval of Tackman. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

With further respect to independent claims 1, 17 and 26, Applicants respectfully submit that Tackman also fails to teach electronic approval and electronic execution notifications that include hyperlinks. The Office cites the same sections discussed above with respect to these features of the claimed invention. However, these passages do not discuss electronic notifications of the providing of hyperlinks to secure computer infrastructure included therein. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With respect to dependent claims 10, 24 and 33, Applicants respectfully submit that Tackman also fails to teach tracking all actions taken by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner in a database according to time, date and an IP address. Rather, the passage of Tackman cited by the Office describes storing of an authoritative copy of the Electronic Agreement on a database. However, this passage fails to disclose the storing of time, date and IP address of this action, much less the storing of this information for *all actions* taken by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner. Thus, the storing of time, date and IP address of the claimed invention is not taught by the storing of an authoritative copy of the Electronic Agreement of Tackman. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With respect to the Office's other arguments regarding dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to the independent claims from which the claims depend. Furthermore, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. Since the cited art does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

B. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 12, 13, 18, 19, 27 AND 28 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection over Tackman in view of Cornelius, Applicants assert that the combined references cited by the Office fail to teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention. For example, with regard to the Office's arguments regarding dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to independent claims listed above. In addition, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. However, for brevity, Applicants will forego addressing each of these rejections individually, but reserve the right to do so should it become necessary. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

IV. CONCLUSION

In addition to the above arguments, Applicants submit that each of the pending claims is patentable for one or more additional unique features. To this extent, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's interpretation of the claimed subject matter or the references used in rejecting the claimed subject matter. Additionally, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's

combinations and modifications of the various references or the motives cited for such combinations and modifications. These features and the appropriateness of the Office's combinations and modifications have not been separately addressed herein for brevity. However, Applicants reserve the right to present such arguments in a later response should one be necessary.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: October 2, 2007

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